

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: Fiscal Year 2015 NOAA New England Bay Watershed Education and Training Program

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NMFS-GARFO-2014-2004167

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.469, Congressionally Identified Awards and Projects

Dates: Applications must be received by <http://www.grants.gov> (Grants.gov), postmarked, or provided to a delivery service by 11:59 pm, Eastern Time on October 31, 2014. Use of Grants.gov is preferred. If Grants.gov cannot reasonably be used, use of U.S. mail or another delivery service must be documented with a receipt; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Applications received more than 5 business days following the postmarked closing date will not be accepted. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted. When developing your submission timeline, please keep in mind that you are encouraged to apply through Grants.gov. This electronic submission system is relatively complex for first time users and involves several preliminary registrations to be completed before your application can be submitted. If you have already used Grants.gov, the required registrations may have already been completed. See Section IV. F. Other Submission Requirements, for a full description of this process. Please allow sufficient time for the application to be submitted electronically and for possible computer delays. Please note: validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov may take up to 2 business days after submission. Please consider this process in developing your submission timeline. Applications not adhering to postmark or submission deadlines will be rejected and returned to the sender without further consideration.

Funding Opportunity Description: The National Marine Fisheries Service Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office is seeking proposals for the New England Bay and Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) Program. NOAA B-WET is an environmental education program that promotes locally relevant, experiential learning in the K-12 environment. Projects awarded through this grant competition provide meaningful watershed educational experiences for students and related professional development for teachers, and help to support regional education and environmental priorities in New England. Successful projects advance the goals of the NOAA Education Strategic Plan, as well as ocean and climate literacy principles (found at <http://oceanliteracy.wp2.coexploration.org/> and

http://cpo.noaa.gov/sites/cpo/Documents/pdf/ClimateLiteracyPoster-8_5x11_Final4-11LR.pdf) and New England states' environmental literacy plans (see <http://www.neeea.org/environmental-literacy/state-elps.html>). Experiential learning techniques, such as those supported by the NOAA B-WET Program, can increase interest in science, technology, engineering, and math, thus contributing to NOAA's obligations under the America COMPETES Act (33 U.S.C. § 893a(a)).

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The NOAA B-WET Program is an environmental education program that supports outdoor, experiential learning through competitive grant awards in specific geographic regions. Prior to 2008, NOAA B-WET Programs were established for the Chesapeake Bay and Monterey, CA areas, and the Hawaiian Islands. In 2008 three new programs began, in New England, the northern Gulf of Mexico, and the Pacific Northwest. We anticipate that funds for new and continuing projects will be available under the New England B-WET program in Fiscal Year (FY) 2015. Proposals are currently being solicited for the New England B-WET program under this funding opportunity. For the purposes of this solicitation, the New England region is defined as the states of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut.

NOAA recognizes that knowledge and commitment built from firsthand experience, especially in the context of one's community and culture, are essential for achieving environmental stewardship. Successful projects are those carefully selected place-based experiences that are driven by rigorous academic learning standards, engendering discovery, wonder, and associated stewardship impulses. B-WET projects nurture a sense of community, enable students to understand their place in their watershed, help reinforce an ethic of responsible citizenship, and promote academic achievement. Experiential learning techniques, such as those supported by the NOAA B-WET Program, have been shown to increase interest in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM).

This funding opportunity supports K-12 environmental education programs that provide students with meaningful watershed education experiences (MWEEs), and provide related professional development and support to in-service teachers, administrators, or other educators serving K-12 students in New England. The Atlantic Ocean and its bays, and tidal and non-tidal rivers and tributaries are an excellent resource for environmental education. These waterbodies and the surrounding landscape provide hands-on, place-based laboratories where students can see, touch, and learn about watersheds and the greater environment.

For purposes of this solicitation, MWEEs are defined as below:

- Experiences are investigative or project oriented. They center around questions, problems, and issues investigated through data collection, observation, and hands-on activities. Experiences stimulate observation, motivate critical thinking, develop problem-solving skills, and instill confidence in students. Where age and experience-appropriate,

technology such as probeware, tablets, and GPS equipment should be integrated throughout the instructional process. Experiences such as tours, gallery visits, simulations, demonstrations, or nature walks may be instructionally useful but alone do not constitute a meaningful experience.

- Experiences are an integral part of the instructional program and clearly part of what is occurring concurrently in the classroom. The experience should be part of the curriculum and align with the academic standards. They should occur where and when they fit into the instructional sequence.

- Experiences do not have to be based solely on scientific disciplines. They may involve materials, resources, and instruments that address multiple topics, such as maritime heritage, history, economics, civic, math, English, art, and the cultural significance of our natural resources. They should make appropriate connections between subject areas and reflect an integrated approach to learning.

- Meaningful experiences are part of a sustained activity that stimulates and motivates the student from beginning to end. Though a watershed experience itself may occur as one specific event on one day, the total duration leading up to and following the experience should involve a significant investment of instructional time. Each experience should consist of three general phases: preparation; action; and reflection. Projects should provide teachers with the support, materials, resources, and information they need to conduct these three phases.

- The preparation phase should focus on a question, problem, or issue and involve students in discussions about it.

- The action phase should include multiple outdoor experiences sufficient to conduct the project, make the observations, or collect the data required. We strongly encourage an action phase that includes both investigation and restoration or stewardship projects that improve the environment.

- The reflection phase should refocus on the question, problem, or issue; analyze the conclusions reached; evaluate the results; assess the activity and the knowledge gained; and include sharing and communication of the results.

- Experiences consider the watershed as a system. MWEEs should make a direct connection to the marine or estuarine environment. Experiences do not have to be water-based activities as long as an intentional connection is made to the watershed, water quality, and the coastal and marine environment. Watershed experiences may include terrestrial activities (e.g., erosion control, buffer creation, groundwater protection, pollution monitoring or prevention).

- NOAA products, services, or personnel enhance these experiences. NOAA can increase the impact of outdoor experiences with its wealth of applicable products and services, and cadre of scientific and professional experts. For example, NOAA data can supplement or contextualize the information collected by students. NOAA personnel have technical knowledge and experience that can serve to complement the classroom teacher's strengths and augment the array of resources for education. The inclusion of NOAA products and services in classroom activities will increase awareness of the agency's vast natural, informational, and data resources and may lead to better understanding of its mission. Additionally, these professionals can serve as important role models for career choices and as natural resources stewards, thus promoting STEM careers.

B. Program Priorities

This Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) supports NOAA's Mission to protect, restore, and manage the use of coastal and ocean resources through ecosystem-based management, and furthers NOAA's vision of "an informed society that uses a comprehensive understanding of the role of the oceans, coasts, and atmosphere in the global ecosystem to make the best social and economic decisions" (see NOAA's Education Strategic Plan at www.education.noaa.gov/plan/09_NOAA_Educ_Strategic_Plan_Color.pdf). Proposed projects must provide MWEEs, as defined above, and professional development to teachers to support MWEEs. Projects must address New England B-WET priorities to promote ocean, climate and environmental literacy. Additionally, the proposals must elect one of the three priority areas of (1) New applicants, (2) New projects and (3) Professional development training and supported MWEEs for low-income and underserved communities. If proposals do not address one of these areas, they will be returned without further review.

Professional Development Training and Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs)

For all proposed projects for this solicitation, teacher/educator professional development should be combined with long term K-12 classroom-integrated MWEEs, which are described above, for the students of these trained teachers. In past solicitations, projects that combined professional development and support for teachers and MWEEs for students were termed "exemplary" projects. Teachers are the ideal providers of meaningful place-based environmental education experiences for students because they can weave together classroom and field activities within the context of their curriculum and current critical issues that impact their watershed. Coupling professional development for teachers with student watershed experiences tied to classroom learning will ensure that the MWEE best practices (detailed in section 1.A.) are fully supported and reinforced throughout the school year. These projects then should include:

- Professional development opportunities that are at least 3 days in duration-either consecutively or over the course of a school year, deliver training on both content and instruction in the outdoors, include year-long support for teachers, and include a plan for how the teachers will be involved in implementing watershed education with their students. This kind of in-depth professional development reinforces a teacher's ability to teach, inspire, and lead young people toward thoughtful stewardship of our natural resources. And;
- MWEEs that provide students with multiple outdoor experiences that are fully supported in the classroom by their teachers to ensure that the concepts of watershed education are reinforced throughout the school year. Outdoor experiences can occur on or near school grounds.

Additional factors taken into consideration in making funding recommendations are:

New England B-WET Regional Priorities

The NOAA B-WET Program advances regional education and environmental priorities specific to different areas of the U.S. by implementing program activities through several regional NOAA offices. New England B-WET is managed by the NOAA Fisheries Service Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office in Gloucester (GARFO), Massachusetts. Within New England, the function of this line office is to study, manage, protect and restore fisheries, endangered species and marine mammals, and watershed, coastal, and marine habitats. These functions align well with all of the Ocean Literacy Principles (see <http://oceanliteracy.wp2.coexploration.org/>), but particularly Principles Five (the ocean supports a great diversity of life and ecosystems) and Six (the ocean and humans are inextricably interconnected). The Climate Literacy Principles (see <http://cpo.noaa.gov/OutreachandEducation/ClimateLiteracy.aspx>, particularly as they relate to our oceans and to coastal resiliency, are also regional priorities of New England B-WET. New England B-WET's advancement of the Ocean and Climate Literacy Principles has become a valuable tool to regionally promote the science and stewardship missions underlying the NOAA Fisheries and other NOAA programs in the Greater Atlantic Region.

Applicants in FY2015 should put forward projects with MWEEs that include scientific studies and stewardship projects that investigate, protect, or restore New England watershed, coastal, and ocean systems and associated resources within the context of the Ocean and/or Climate Literacy Principles. Science curricula currently taught in schools can be enriched by using the rigorous academic standards and best practices that define MWEEs and emphasize connectivity and interrelationships inherent in the Ocean and Climate Literacy Principles. Proposed projects should reflect the grade level of the target students.

In addition to focusing on the Ocean and Climate Literacy principles as they relate to living marine resources (endangered species, marine mammals, sustainable fish populations) and the watershed and coastal habitats that support these resources, applicants should choose

one of the three additional priorities, described below, that their project best achieves. Ability to meet at least one of these priorities will be taken into consideration in making funding recommendations (see Section V.B. Review and Selection Process): (1) New applicants, (2) New projects, or (3) Professional development training and supported MWEEs for low-income and underserved communities.

1. New applicants.

New England B-WET fosters the growth of new, innovative program and encourages capacity building for environmental education in New England states. This priority actively promotes new applicants to submit proposals for B-WET funding.

2. New projects.

Previous New-England B-WET grantees that have successfully conducted and completed a B-WET project may apply for a new B-WET grant under this funding opportunity. New projects should leverage lessons learned in earlier B-WET activities, but should have a novel audience, research plan, stewardship effort, or literacy components.

3. Professional development training and supported MWEEs for low-income and underserved communities.

New England B-WET is strongly committed to expanding the knowledge and participation of low income and underserved student populations in marine and environmental studies. Under this priority, at least 60% of the target student audience served by these projects will be from a low income or underserved student population. These populations include Title 1 schools, minority groups, underrepresented communities, populations served by native American and tribal organizations, and rural schools.

C. Program Authority

Under 33 U.S.C. § 893a (a), the Administrator of NOAA is authorized to conduct, develop, support, promote, and coordinate formal and informal educational activities at all levels to enhance public awareness and understanding of ocean, coastal, Great Lakes, and atmospheric science and stewardship by the general public and other coastal stakeholders, including underrepresented groups in ocean and atmospheric science and policy careers. In conducting those activities, the Administrator shall build upon the educational programs and activities of the agency, with consideration given to the goal of promoting the participation of individuals from underrepresented groups in STEM fields and in promoting the acquisition and retention of highly qualified and motivated young scientists to complement and supplement workforce needs.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

We anticipate that approximately \$470,000 may be available for New England B-WET awards in FY2015. If funding is available, we anticipate allocating approximately \$270,000 to fund year 3 of continuing projects. These continuing projects were identified as multi-year awards in a previous application year. Renewals of these multi-year awards will occur pending adequate and timely submission of project performance reports and documentation of adequate progress towards stated objectives. These multi-year projects will not undergo competitive review in this FY 2015 application process.

We anticipate \$200,000 will be available for new FY 2015 B-WET awards under this FFO. NOAA anticipates making approximately three to six new New England B-WET awards during FY 2015 in award amounts to be determined by proposal quality and available funds. We will consider projects with durations of one to three years.

Funds for new project in FY 2015 may be limited. Therefore, New England B-WET may carry over the results of this competition, including the results of the application review and rankings. While we anticipate funding three to six proposals in FY 2015, additional proposals from this competition may be selected for funding in the next fiscal year (FY 2016), subject to the availability of funds. This possibility is dependent on a determination that project applications received under this funding opportunity for FY 2015 funds remain relevant to NOAA priorities in New England. New England B-WET is considering this course because it makes use of the work that has been completed by the applicants in developing their FY 2015 application, and by the agency in conducting panel reviews. If we decide to select proposals from this competition in FY 2016, the standard practice of considering the remaining projects from this solicitation in rank order will be followed.

The total Federal amount that may be requested from NOAA shall not exceed \$80,000 per year in any year, and \$240,000 in total. The minimum Federal amount that can be requested from NOAA for one year is \$25,000 per year. Applications requesting Federal support from NOAA of less than \$25,000 in any year or more than \$80,000 in any year and more than \$240,000 total for the duration of the project will not be considered for funding.

There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all qualified projects. The exact amount of funds that may be awarded will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA representatives. Publication of this notice does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. If applicants incur any costs prior to an award being made, they do so at their own risk of not being reimbursed by the government. Notwithstanding verbal or written assurance that may have been received, there is no obligation on the part of NOAA to cover pre-award

costs unless these are approved by the NOAA Grants Officer as part of the terms when the award is made.

Projects that are awarded as multi-year (two or three year) awards will receive funding for only the first year of the award in FY2015. Funding for future years is dependent on the program budget and priorities in those years, and out-year funding for grant awards is not guaranteed. We recommend you include in your project description discrete deliverables that would be complete at the end of each year of the project in case funds for future years are not available.

B. Project/Award Period

The project start date should not be earlier than July 1, 2015. Applications should cover a project period from one to three years in length. Applications must include a project description and a budget for the entire period. Applicants selected to receive funding may be asked to modify the project start date. We recommend that your project description include a flexible requested start date. See Section II. A. Funding Availability, for more information on funding for multiyear awards.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

The funding instrument (grant or cooperative agreement) will be determined by the NOAA Grants Office. A cooperative agreement will be used if the proposed project involves substantial NOAA Federal scientific or programmatic involvement as described in the award. Substantial involvement means that, after award, NOAA scientific or Program staff will assist, guide, coordinate, or participate in project activities in a partnership role; it is not to assume direction, prime responsibility, or a dominant role in the activities. The dominant role and prime responsibility resides with the grantee for the project as a whole, although specific tasks and activities may be shared among the grantee and NOAA. Examples of substantial NOAA involvement may include non-compensated collaboration in research or approval of key stages in the project before subsequent steps are undertaken. The exact amount of funds, the scope of work, and terms and conditions of a successful award will be determined in pre-award negotiations between you and NOAA/NMFS representatives.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are K-12 public and independent schools and school systems; institutions of higher education; community-based and nonprofit organizations; state, county, local, or Indian tribal government agencies; and regional organizations.

While applicants do not need to be located in the targeted geographical region specified in the program objectives (i.e., in the New England states), they do need to focus the proposed work on target audiences in this geographical region in order to be a qualified applicant.

The Department of Commerce/ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (DOC/NOAA) is strongly committed to broadening the participation of historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, tribal colleges and universities, and institutions that work in under-served areas. The B-WET Program encourages proposals from, or involving, any of the above institutions. Information on minority serving institutions and demographics of k-12 schools can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/edlite-minorityinst.html>.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

Cost sharing or matching is not required. However, the NOAA B-WET Program strongly encourages applicants to include a 25% or higher match. If you choose to cost share, and your application is selected for funding, you will be obligated to account for the amount of cost share dollars reflected in the award documents, signed by the NOAA Grants Officer. The funds you provide as voluntary cost sharing may include funds from private sources or from state or local governments, or the value of in-kind contributions. Federal funds or funds used to match other federal aid cannot be used as match. In-kind contributions may include, but are not limited to, personal services volunteered to perform tasks in the project, and permission to use, at no cost, real or personal property owned by others. We will determine the appropriateness of all cost sharing proposals, including the valuation of in-kind contributions, on the basis of guidance provided in 15 CFR parts 14 or 24, as applicable.

Although matching funds are not required, we consider the ability to leverage other resources such as matching funds during the review process. For closely scored applications, the identification of matching funds may be a tie-breaker.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Federal agencies and their personnel are not permitted to receive funding under this competition; however Federal employees can serve as uncompensated partners or co-Principal Investigators on proposals. Should you wish to partner with a NOAA employee,

who will act as a partner in the project, a written agreement of this participation must be provided, detailing their involvement, signed by the employee's supervisor. NOAA involvement could include planning, scheduling, conducting, and evaluating proposed project activities and frequent contact with the applicant to help solve technical problems/situations as they arise during performance of the award.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

The standard application is available at <http://www.grants.gov> (Grants.gov). Users of Grants.gov will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it off line, and then upload and submit the application via the Grants.gov site. If an applicant has problems downloading the application forms from Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@Grants.gov. If you do not have internet access, an application package may be received by contacting Deirdre Kimball (deirdre.kimball@noaa.gov, 978-281-9290).

B. Content and Form of Application

If Grants.gov cannot reasonably be used, or if internet access is not available to you or your organization, paper applications will be accepted. Paper applications must be submitted with completed, signed, original forms in hard copy and an electronic copy of the entire application on CD, including scanned signed forms. If the applicant has completed the entire application in Grants.gov but is unable to submit it via Grants.gov, then this application package should be provided via CD along with printed and signed versions of forms SF-424, SF-424B, and CD-511. The authorized representative **MUST** sign and date these forms over the printed signature that will appear in the signature box. Paper applications should be printed on one side only, on 8.5" x 11" paper, and should not be bound in any manner.

Paper applications without inked signatures on their forms will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed. Paper applications must be mailed to the NOAA Fisheries Service, Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (see Section V. F. Other Submission Requirements), for complete mailing information).

Brevity will assist reviewers and Program staff in effectively processing the proposals. However, applicants should not assume prior knowledge on the part of the New England B-WET Program Office or the reviewers as to the relative merits of the project described in the application. Proposals must be in at least a 10-point font, single spaced, and not exceed noted page limits.

1. Federal Forms

The following Federal Forms are required and must be submitted with each application:

- Application for Federal Assistance: Form SF-424 Funding on this form (items 18 a – g) should reflect the total of ALL years of funding requested in the application and include the Federal request and proposed matching funds.
- Budget Information, Non-construction Programs: Form SF-424A. Separate Form SF424A budget forms should be submitted for each year of requested funding. In Section B, use separate columns to indicate how Federal funds and matching funds (if applicable) are broken down by cost category.
- Assurances, Non-construction Programs: Form SF-424B
- Certifications Regarding Lobbying: Form CD-511
- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities: Form SF-LLL (if applicable). You must complete and submit this form if you have made or have agreed to make payment to any lobbying entity for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, and officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with the awarding of or the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, cooperative agreement, or loan. Recipients may not use funds awarded under a Federal grant or cooperative agreement to conduct such lobbying activities.

2. Project Summary (described below, one page limit)

The Project Summary should include:

- Organization title.
- Principal Investigator(s).
- Address, telephone number, and email address of Principal Investigator(s).
- Priority under which you are applying (i.e. New Applicant, New Project, Professional development training and supported MWEs for low-income and underserved communities - choose the priority that best fits your project).
- Project title.
- Project duration (12 to 36 month project period starting on the first of a month and ending on the last day of the final month). Specify whether the project is being submitted with the intention of continuation beyond the first year.
- Organization and Partnerships: Briefly describe your organization, and list your partners for this grant, if applicable. Partnerships are encouraged.

- Summary of work to be performed during the project period: Provide a brief statement that explains the need for your project and its goals and objectives. In addition, identify what NOAA GARFO regional priorities (living marine resources (endangered species, marine mammals, sustainable fish populations) and the watershed and coastal habitats that support these resources) you will address and/or NOAA assets and educational resources you will use. Your summary should use plain language so that reviewers can understand the purpose and expected outcomes of your educational project, including the number of teachers/students targeted. A person unfamiliar with your project should be able to read this paragraph and understand your proposal. More information about NOAA assets can be found at http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/NOAA_assets.html and <http://www.education.noaa.gov/>

- List primary objectives for the entire anticipated project period, broken out by year (include number of teachers and/or students to be reached, anticipated contact hours, and deliverables each year).

- Budget Information:

- Total Federal funding requested FY 2015.
- Cost-sharing or matching from non-Federal sources, if any. Specify whether contributions are project-related cash or in-kind.
- Total project cost for FY 2015.
- Annual cost per student and/or teacher.
- Total Federal and cost sharing (match) proposed for entire award period (if applying for a multi-year award)

3. Project Narrative (described below, 10 page limit)

The project narrative must be detailed enough to for reviewers to make a clear connection between the proposed activities and the proposed project costs, and should closely follow the organization of the reviewer evaluation criteria (see Section V. A) for the application to receive a consistent review against competing applications.

- Benefits or results expected: Identify the results or benefits to be derived from the proposed activities each year and through the project overall. Include the number of students and/or teachers directly affected by the grant in each year of the project. Also include a per-teacher and/or per-student calculation for each project year that includes anticipated cost, contact hours, hours outdoors, and other relevant metrics.

- Project description and design: Describe in detail what your project will achieve and the methods/activities proposed to achieve these goals. Proposals should explain how the project proposes to implement the various components of a meaningful watershed educational experience (MWEE) described in Section 1. A. Program Objectives (including alignment with state standards) and professional development.

- Project evaluation: For the B-WET program, project evaluation is defined as the systematic collection and documentation of information about your project's outcomes in order to improve the project's effectiveness, guide judgments about its impact, and/or inform decisions about future programming or funding. Although a range of budgets for project evaluations will be accepted, we think it is reasonable to allocate 10% of the budget to a comprehensive evaluation of the project. For detailed information on how to create an evaluation plan, please refer to the California B-WET website at <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/education/evaluation/welcome.html>. If funded by NOAA, grant recipients must be willing to report evaluation results to NOAA.

- Participation in B-WET National Evaluation: In addition to project evaluation, grantees may be asked to participate in data collection for the national B-WET evaluation. B-WET has created a cross-region, internal evaluation system to monitor program implementation and outcomes on an ongoing basis. Results of this evaluation will be used to make adjustments to B-WET Federal Funding Opportunities (FFOs) and activities in order to improve the B-WET program, document its value, and better tailor it to program audiences. Furthermore, the system will generate a data set that will be valuable to researchers and has the potential to inform the field of environmental education more broadly. Success of this effort depends on grantee participation, so applicants are strongly encouraged to review the information about the national evaluation system (available here: http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/bwet_eval.php) and consider how they can support it as part of their projects.

As part of this evaluation system, recipients of B-WET grants and teacher-participants in grantees' professional development programs may be asked to voluntarily complete online questionnaires to provide evaluation data. One individual from each grantee organization will be asked to complete a questionnaire once per year of the award. For projects that work with teachers, the teacher-participants will be asked (using email addresses provided by the grantee organization) to complete one questionnaire at the close of their professional development and one after implementing Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences with their students (at the end of the following school year). Grantees should be able to complete their questionnaire within 30-60 minutes (depending on the nature of their program) and teachers, within 30 minutes. B-WET grantees and teachers who respond to the questionnaires will remain anonymous to B-WET and NOAA. NOAA will only view the resulting data in aggregate at the national or regional level. However, grantees will receive a

password-protected report link to allow them to view data from teacher participants of their project in aggregate.

Grantees are encouraged to provide information about how they plan to support this national evaluation system, incorporate it into the project timeline, and ensure responses from participating teachers as part of their application. More information, including all of the survey instruments, is available on the NOAA B-WET national website here: http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/bwet_eval.php. Grantees should review the information available and take this into consideration in the planning for their project evaluations. For example, grantees may not need to include questions that will be answered through the teacher instrument in their own evaluations.

Wherever possible, grantees should try to incorporate participation in the evaluation system into existing requirements for professional development program completion. For example, on completion of the teacher professional development survey, teachers could receive some program incentive.

Note that this evaluation system is not intended to fully replace project level evaluation. While grantees will have access to their teacher's data from the evaluation system, the national evaluation may not provide the level of detail needed to fully understand, describe, and improve specific grant projects. Grantees are therefore encouraged to balance these needs within the 10% of their budget that is recommended for evaluation.

Additional information about this project, including background, FAQs, survey instruments, and suggested text for communicating with your teacher participants about this project, is available here: http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/grants/bwet_eval.php. This data collection will be conducted in a manner consistent with OMB guidelines (OMB Control No 0648-0658).

- **Organization and Personnel:** Describe how the project will be organized and managed. Proposals should demonstrate the applicant organization's knowledge and experience in delivering the project requested in this application. The principal investigator may or may not be the applicant; however, if the applicant is not the principal investigator, there must be an explanation of the relationship between the applicant and principal investigator (e.g., the applicant may be responsible for managing the grant funds and the principal investigator will be responsible for completing the work). Include the resume or curriculum vitae of the principal investigator(s) and any consultants and/or subcontractors, and indicate their level of involvement in the project. Include copies of any agreements between you and the participants describing the specific tasks to be performed. Agreement documents and resumes/curriculum vitae (2 page maximum for each major participant) should be included in the "Supporting Documentation." This information does not count toward the project narrative's 10 page limitation.

- Partnerships: Describe any partnerships with other organizations and/or schools which are integral to this project. Wherever reasonable, proposals should include partnerships with school districts or divisions and/or the state department of education if your organization is not one of these entities. Projects are also encouraged to collaborate with NOAA entities as partners. NOAA entities include programs, offices, and organizations, such as the NOAA Fisheries Science Center or Regional Office, National Estuarine Research Reserve System, National Marine Sanctuary Program, National Sea Grant College Program, National Weather Service Weather Forecast Offices, NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration, NOAA Cooperative Institutes, and the Northeast Regional Associations of the Integrated Ocean Observing System.

- Letters of support from each partner making a significant contribution to the project are required with the application package (see "Appendices" below).

- If you anticipate collaborating with other regional B-WET grant recipients to conduct a regional conference, to allow former and current B-WET grant recipients to present their B- WET projects or confer on regional B-WET programming, this should be described in your narrative and your budget should include, in the travel category, funds for transportation (airfare, rental car, shuttle, or taxi), lodging, and per diem. Although this is considered an outreach and education opportunity, it should not be the sole justification to meet the outreach and education criteria; local communication with the public is required as well (see Outreach and Education bullet below).

- Outreach and Education: Projects should include a significant external sharing and communication mechanism that encourages students and/or teachers to share their experiences with the public, peers, and the environmental education community. These mechanisms could include media (newspaper articles, websites, etc.), mentoring opportunities, and presentations at conferences, in-school service days, or other public forums.

4. Budget Narrative

A detailed, narrative budget justification (4 page limit, separate document from the summary and project narrative):

- The narrative budget justification should include a detailed breakdown by cost category (object class) separated into Federal and non-Federal shares as they relate to specific aspects of the project, with narrative justification for both the Federal and non-Federal shares. The source of any matching funds or in-kind contributions should be explained.

- The dollar amounts and object classes in the narrative must match those on the Form SF-424A. Applicants should use the NOAA B-WET Budget Justification Spreadsheet

to clarify their narrative and for more information on the level of detail needed in the justification; available online at:

http://www.ner.noaa.gov/educational_resources/bwet/applicants/index.html. For multi-year projects, ensure that there is a detailed budget narrative explaining the budget requested for each year matching the SF-424A form.

- Explain the need for government financial assistance. Also explain the total project costs needed to accomplish this project, if there are costs beyond the Federal request and voluntary non-Federal match proposed in this application. List all other sources of funding that will be or have been sought for the project and the status of each request. If no other funding has been sought, explain. Discuss a plan for sustainability of project beyond NOAA funding.

5. Appendices

Appendices may include: the curriculum vitae or resume of each of the primary project personnel (5 pages), sample curriculum and lesson plans (5 pages), letters of endorsement (particularly from those the project benefits and from other non-partner entities - unlimited page limit), and/or letters of support (required from partner organizations - unlimited page limit).

C. Submission Dates and Times

Full proposals must be received by Grants.gov, postmarked, or provided to a delivery service on or before 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time, October 31, 2014. Please note: validation or rejection of your application by Grants.gov may take up to 2 business days after submission. Please consider this timeline process in submitting your application. Applications postmarked or provided to a delivery service after the deadline will not be considered for funding.

Applications submitted via the U.S. Postal Service must have an official postmark; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Any application received later than 5 business days following the postmark closing date will not be accepted. No fax or email applications will be accepted.

D. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.

E. Funding Restrictions

B-WET and the NOAA's Grants management Division staff will review budget information for recommended applications to determine if costs are allowable, allocable, reasonable, and realistic.

- Allowable Costs: Funds awarded cannot necessarily pay for all the costs that the recipient might incur in the course of carrying out the project. Generally, costs that are allowable include salaries, equipment, and supplies, as long as these are "necessary and reasonable" specifically for the purpose of the award. For allowable costs, see the OMB Circulars A- 122, "Cost Principles for Non-profit Organizations" (2 CFR, Part 230); A-21, "Cost Principles for Education Institutions" (2 CFR, Part 220); A-87, "Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments" (2 CFR, Part 225); and the Federal Acquisition Regulation, codified at 48 CFR, Subpart 31.2 "Contracts with Commercial Organizations." All sub-awards (subgrants, subcontracts, etc.) are subject to those Federal cost principles applicable to the particular type of organization concerned.

- Pre-award costs are generally not allowed. A pre-award cost incurred before the NOAA Grants Officer provides a notice of award is assumed at your own risk. Typically, the earliest project start date for awards will be July 1, 2015. Applicants should consider this award timing when developing plans for proposed activities.

- Indirect Costs: The budget may include an amount for indirect costs if your organization has an established indirect cost rate with the Federal government. Indirect costs are essentially overhead costs for basic operational functions (e.g., lights, rent, water, insurance) that are incurred for common or joint objectives and therefore cannot be identified specifically within a particular project. For this solicitation, the Federal share of the indirect costs must not exceed the lesser of either the indirect costs your organization would be entitled to if the Negotiated Federal Indirect Cost rate were used or 25 percent of the Federal direct costs proposed. For those situations in which the use of your organization's indirect negotiated cost rate would result in indirect costs greater than 25 percent of the Federal direct costs, the difference may be counted as part of the non- Federal share.

A copy of your organization's current, approved Negotiated Indirect Cost Agreement with the Federal government should be included with the application. If your organization does not have a current negotiated rate and plans to seek reimbursement for indirect costs, documentation necessary to establish a rate should be submitted prior to receiving an award, and a copy of this documentation and the related cover letter should be included with the application.

F. Other Submission Requirements

Registration Process

1. Required registrations: You must complete and maintain the following registrations to be eligible to submit an application using the Grants.Gov website. All registrations must be completed prior to the application being submitted. Registration can take between 3 days to 4 weeks or more, so applicants should begin the registration process as soon as possible.

(a) Grants.Gov: The first step in submitting an application online is to complete a one-time registration process.

(b) Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) - All Applicant Organizations must be issued a DUNS number. A DUNS number is a unique nine-digit identification number provided by Dun and Brad Street. It will be used as the Universal Identifier when applying for federal awards or cooperative agreements. You may request a DUNS number by calling 1-866-705-5711 (toll free) or through the internet at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. Your DUNS Number assignment is free.

(c) System for Award Management (SAM) – All Applicant Organizations must complete and maintain an active registration, which requires renewal at least annually. New registrations take an average of 14 business days for new registrations. The renewal process may require as much time as the initial registration. SAM registration includes the assignment of a Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) Code for domestic organizations which have not already been assigned a CAGE Code. To register, go to: <http://www.SAM.gov>. Registration is free.

2. Only authorized individual(s) will be able to submit the application, and the system may need time to process a submitted application. After you electronically submit your application, you will receive from Grants.gov an automatic acknowledgment of receipt that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. (This notification indicates receipt by Grants.gov only, not receipt by NOAA.) Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be accompanied by THREE automated responses (the first confirms receipt; the second confirms that there are no errors with an application submission; and the third validates that the application has been forwarded to NOAA for further processing). You should save and print the proof of submission. If all notifications are not received, applicants should follow up with both the Grants.gov help desk and Deirdre Kimball to confirm NOAA receipt of the complete submission. You must obtain a Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number and must keep a record of it.

3. Information on the New England B-WET program, including examples of currently supported projects, can be found on the world-wide-web at http://www.nero.noaa.gov/educational_resources/bwet/. Potential applicants may contact the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (Colleen.Coogan@noaa.gov or Deirdre.kimball@noaa.gov) before submitting an application to discuss the applicability of project ideas to B-WET goals and objectives. Please note that B-WET staff are not allowed to assist in the preparation of an application or proposal, except that these individuals may provide you with information on program goals, funding priorities, application procedures, and completion of application forms. Because this is a competitive program, B-WET staff will not provide assistance in conceptualizing, developing, or structuring proposals, or write letters of support for an application or proposal.

If Grants.gov cannot reasonably be used, or internet access is not available to you, a hard-copy application package (as outlined in Section IV. B. Content and Form of Application) must be postmarked, or provided to a delivery service and documented with a receipt, by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time, October 31, 2014, and sent to: Deirdre Kimball, NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

Reviewers will assign scores to applications ranging from 0-100 points based on the following five standard NOAA evaluation criteria. The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses. Each criterion also includes the factors that reviewers will consider to determine how well an application meets the criterion. We encourage applicants to make explicit connections to the evaluation criterion and factors in their applications, and respective weights specified below. Applications that best address these criteria will be most competitive.

1. Importance and/or relevance and applicability of proposal to the program goals (31 points) This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, Federal, regional, state, or local activities.

- Does the educational experience focus around questions, problems, or issues pertaining to the New England region, such as the application of ocean and other environmental literacy principles to the study, protection, and restoration of fisheries, endangered species and marine mammals, or watershed, coastal, and marine habitats? (5 pts)

Based on the priority area (see Section I.B.) that the applicant has identified in their project summary, one of the following criteria will apply:

- If the applicant is applying under Priority 1 (New applicant), does the application demonstrate that the principal investigator and partners have not previously received a New England B-WET award? (5 pts)

Or;

If the applicant is applying under Priority 2 (New project), does the application demonstrate that the proposed project is different (new audience, research plan, stewardship effort, literacy components) from projects conducted under the applicant's previous New England B-WET grants? (5 pts)

Or;

If the applicant is applying under Priority 3 (Professional development training and supported MWEEs for low-income and underserved communities): Does the applicant demonstrate that at least 60% of the students targeted qualify for free or reduced lunches, speak English as a second language, are minority students, are served by native American and tribal organizations, and/or are in rural schools? (5pts)

- Does the project intend to increase understanding of the connection between the watershed and the greater marine or estuarine environment? (4pts)

- Does the project intentionally identify connections between actions within the watershed or hydrological system affecting the marine, estuarine or watershed environment? (4 pts)

- Does the applicant incorporate NOAA programs, science, lesson plans, or curricula focused on watershed, marine, estuarine or hydrological system issues? Does the applicant use NOAA personnel and resources? (5 pts)

- Is the project aligned with the Ocean, or Climate Literacy principles? (Note: estuarine and watershed concepts should be tied to the Ocean Literacy Principles) (4 pts)

- What is the likelihood that the proposed activities will improve students' general understanding of the environment? (2 pts)

- Does the applicant show a knowledge and understanding of the NOAA Education Plan (www.oesd.noaa.gov/NOAA_Ed_Plan.pdf)? Does the applicant demonstrate how their project is aligned with and supports the goals and strategies of the NOAA Education Plan? (2 pts)

2. Technical merit (38 points) This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives.

- Does the applicant demonstrate that their project combines teacher professional development and support for long-term classroom-integrated Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (see MWEEs description in Section I. A Program Objectives for students)? (5 pts)

- Are the proposed activities project-oriented, hands-on, investigative, and part of a sustained activity? (5pts)

- Does the project include pre-and post-field work activities? (5 pts)

- Does the proposal clearly outline how the project is an integral part of the instructional program? (4 pts)

- Are the objectives in the proposal clearly defined and focused? Does the applicant demonstrate that the objectives are realistic and can be reached within the proposed project period? (3pts)

- Does the project include a service or stewardship component? (2 pts)

- Does the project address multiple disciplines? (2 pts)

- Does the applicant discuss how the B-WET National Evaluation system will be incorporated into their plans for project evaluation? (2 pt)

- Are the project outcomes identified, and are they measurable and likely to have significant and lasting benefits for teachers and students? (2 pts)

- Does the evaluation component of the project focus on measuring changes in participants? Changes can be in knowledge, attitudes, skills or stewardship attitudes and conservation actions (2 pts)

- Do the changes that will be measured in participants (outcomes) match the project goals and objectives, which include engaging participants in MWEEs? (2 pts)

- Does the project serve to integrate ocean and environmental literacy into a school or school system on a continuing, sustainable basis? (3 pts)

- Does the project focus on an aspect of science, technology, engineering and/or math (STEM)? (1 pt)

3. Overall qualifications of applicants (9 points) This criterion ascertains whether the applicant demonstrates that they and their partners possess the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.

- Does the applicant show capability and experience in successfully completing similar projects? (3pts)
- Does the applicant show that the partners involved in the project are qualified? (3 pts)
- Does the applicant demonstrate knowledge of the Content Standards for their state? (2 pt)
- Does the applicant demonstrate knowledge of the target audience? (1 pt)

4 Project costs (16 points) This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time.

- Is the proposed budget sufficiently detailed, with appropriate budget breakdown and justification of both Federal and non-Federal shares by object class? (4 pts)
- Is a significant percentage of the budget directly related to bringing students and teachers in contact with the outdoor environment? (4 pts)
- Is the budget reasonable? (3 pts)
- Does the applicant demonstrate sustainability beyond the project period, after NOAA funding has expired? (3 pts)
- Does the applicant demonstrate the ability to leverage other resources (i.e. are matching funds proposed)? (2 pts)

5. Outreach and education (6 points) This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission, and for the B-WET Program, such activities specifically include education and outreach to the public, the local community, and others involved in education.

- Does the project involve external sharing and communication by the applicant (websites, shared curricula materials, DVD production, conference presentations, etc)? (3 pts)
- Does the target audience share their findings, experiences, or results with their peers or their community? (3 pts)

B. Review and Selection Process

1. Initial Evaluation of the Application

An initial administrative review is conducted on each application to determine compliance with submission requirements and completeness of application materials. Applications determined to be ineligible, incomplete or non-responsive may be eliminated from further review.

2. Merit Review

Applications that meet the initial submission requirements of this solicitation will be evaluated and scored by independent reviewers who may participate in one or more review panels. The number of review panels will depend on the number of applications received for each Program Priority. Reviewers serving on the panels may be Federal or non-Federal experts in areas relevant to the priorities under consideration. Each proposal will be reviewed by a minimum of three reviewers. New England B-WET Program staff will not vote or score applications submitted to the review panels.

Before the panel(s) convenes, each reviewer will individually evaluate and score proposals using the evaluation criteria provided in Section V.A above. Scores and comments will be submitted to the B-WET Program staff, and the individual reviewers' rating will be averaged for each application to establish a preliminary rank order for each panel. If there are multiple panels, each panel will convene separately to review the ranking and comments, and discuss the projects as a group. During the panel meetings, reviewers can revise their scores and comments. Reviewers must individually submit final scores to the B-WET Program staff by the end of the panel meeting. Consensus scoring will not be used by the review panel.

The reviewers' final scores will be averaged for each application to produce a rank order of the proposals for each panel. If there are multiple panels, the ranked lists from panels may not be combined to establish an overall rank order for all proposals.

The Program staff will make recommendations for funding to the Selecting Official, the GARFO Regional Administrator, based on rank order of each panel and the selection factors listed below.

C. Selection Factors

The B-WET Program staff will review the ranking of the proposals and recommendations of the review panel(s). The average numerical ranking from each review panel will be the primary factor in deciding which proposals will be recommended for

funding to the Selecting Official. The Selecting Official will award in rank order within each panel, unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the following factors:

1. Availability of funding,
2. Balance/distribution of funds,
 - a. Geographic,
 - b. Institution or type of institutions,
 - c. Type of partners,
 - d. Research areas,
 - e. Project types,
3. Whether this project duplicates other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other Federal agencies,
4. Program priorities and policy factors as set out in Section I.B. (Program Priorities) of this FFO,
5. Applicant's prior award performance in conducting a previous award, such as the applicant's use of funds, achievement of project objectives, and compliance with grant conditions. The Selecting Official may also consider whether the applicant failed to submit a timely performance report or submitted a report of unacceptable quality:
6. Partnerships and/or participation of targeted groups including underrepresented or underserved groups identified under Section III (Eligibility Information) of this FFO.
7. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the NOAA Grants Officer.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

The competitive selection process and subsequent notification of applications being considered for funding are expected to be complete by Winter 2015. The earliest start date for projects will be July 1, 2015, dependent upon availability of Federal funding, acceptable completion of all NOAA/applicant negotiations, and the provision of other supporting documentation as requested.

If few or no funds are available for new grants within the New England B-WET Program in 2015, we will hold applications received under this FFO and consider them for

funding in 2016, subject to the availability of funds. This may result in applicants being asked to modify their start dates.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Upon completion of the review and selection process, successful applicants will receive notification from B-WET Program staff that the application has been recommended for funding to the NOAA Grants Management Division. This notification is not an authorization to begin performance of the project, and is not a guarantee of funding. Official notification of funding, signed by the NOAA Grants Officer, is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin. This notification will be issued to the Authorizing Representative of the project either electronically through use of Grants Online or in hard copy. Projects should not be initiated in expectation of Federal funding until the Applicant's Authorized Representative has received official notice of the award from the NOAA Grants Officer and has reviewed and accepted the terms of the award. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their proposal was not selected for recommendation recommended for funding or was not reviewed because it did not meet the minimum requirements described in Section IV. B (Content and Form of Application). Unsuccessful applications will be retained for three years and then destroyed. Successful applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets prior to final approval of an award. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement with the activities of each project will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, the NOAA Grants Office, and NOAA B-WET program staff.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. Administrative Requirements

Successful applicants who accept a NOAA award under this solicitation will be bound by Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions. This document will be provided in the award package and is located at http://www.osc.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/documents/DOC_Standard_Terms_and_Conditions_01_10_2013.pdf. In addition, please read the award documents provided by the NOAA Grants Management Division in the Grants Online. In addition, the award package may contain special award conditions limiting the use of funds for activities that have outstanding environmental compliance requirements and/or stating other compliance requirements for the award as applicable, including the acknowledgement of support from

NOAA and NE B-WET on webpages, DVDs, curricula materials, lesson plans or other materials created or supported under the B-WET grant. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review award documents carefully before accepting a Federal award so they are fully aware of the relevant Standard Terms and Conditions as well as any special award conditions that may have been placed on the award.

Administrative and national policy requirements for all Department of Commerce awards are contained in the Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements published in the Federal Register on December 17, 2012 (77 FR 74634). You may obtain a copy of this notice by contacting the agency contact(s) under section VII., or electronically at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-12-17/pdf/2012-30228.pdf>. Applicants whose proposed projects may have an environmental impact must furnish information requested to assist proposal reviewers in assessing the potential environmental consequences of supporting the project.

Uniform Administrative Requirements: Among other things, the DOC Pre-Award Notification Requirements notify applicants of the uniform administrative requirements and cost principles that apply to all DOC grants and cooperative agreements. Applicants should note that on December 26, 2013, OMB published final guidance titled Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements (OMB Uniform Guidance) (<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2013/12/26/2013-30465/uniform-administrative-requirements-cost-principles-and-audit-requirements-for-federal-awards>), which streamlines the language from eight existing OMB circulars, including Cost Principles (OMB Circulars A-21, A-87, A 122) and administrative requirements (OMB Circulars A 102 and A 110), into one consolidated set of guidance applicable to federal assistance awards. Once adopted, the OMB Uniform Guidance will supersede DOC's uniform administrative requirements set out at 15 C.F.R. parts 14 and 24. The DOC expects to adopt the OMB Uniform Guidance by December 26, 2014, meaning that the OMB Uniform Guidance will apply to all new awards and to additional funding to existing awards made after December 26, 2014. In addition, the audit requirements of the OMB Uniform Guidance will apply to audits of non federal entities beginning on or after December 26, 2014. Therefore, applicants should familiarize themselves with the OMB Uniform Guidance. Additional information on the substance of and transition to the OMB Uniform Guidance may be found at <https://cfo.gov/cofar/>.

2. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires NOAA to analyze the potential environmental impacts of proposed projects of applicants seeking NOAA Federal funding. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: www.nepa.noaa.gov/, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6_TOC.pdf, and the Council on

Environmental Quality's implementation regulations, http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/NEPA/regs/ceq/toc_ceq.htm. Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under the description of project activities, applicants must provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species, and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems). In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required environmental impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. The failure to do so shall be grounds for not selecting an application. In some cases, if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds can be withheld by the Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment on any impacts that a project may have on the environment.

Your organization is responsible for obtaining all necessary Federal, state, and local government permits and approvals for the work to be conducted. You must design their proposed activities to minimize the potential for adverse impacts to the environment. If applicable, documentation of requests for, or approvals of, required environmental permits should be included in the application package. Applications will be reviewed to ensure that they contain sufficient information to allow NOAA to conduct a NEPA analysis so that appropriate NEPA documentation, required as part of the application package, can be submitted to the NOAA Grants Management Division, along with the recommendation for funding.

3. NOAA's Data Sharing Policy: Environmental data and information collected and/or created under NOAA grants/cooperative agreements must be made visible, accessible, and independently understandable to general users, free of charge or at minimal cost, in a timely manner (typically no later than 2 years after the data are collected or created), except where limited by law, regulation, policy or security requirements. The Data/Information Sharing Plan (and any subsequent revisions or updates) must be made publically available at the time of award and, thereafter, will be posted with published data. Failing to share environmental data and information in accordance with the submitted Data/Information Sharing Plan may lead to disallowed costs and be considered by NOAA when making future award decision. If your proposed activities do not generate any environmental data, your application is still required to have a data sharing plan. Such a data sharing plan could include the statement that "this project will not generate any environmental data". More

information about the Data Sharing Policy is available on NOAA's Environmental data Management Committee website at: <http://www.nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/PD.DSP.php>

4. Limitation of Liability - Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of Fiscal Year 2015 appropriations. Applicants are hereby given notice that amount of funds have not yet been determined for the B-WET program described in this notice and are advised that the competition described herein may be subject to cancellation due to unavailability of funding or revision of agency priorities. In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for preparation costs. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award funding for specific projects or obligate available funds. You should not initiate your project in expectation of Federal funding until you receive a grant award document signed by an authorized NOAA official. If you incur any costs prior to receiving an award agreement signed by an authorized NOAA official, you do so solely at your own risk of these costs not being included under the award. Recipients and sub-recipients are subject to all Federal laws and agency policies, regulations and procedures applicable to Federal financial assistance awards.

5. Paperwork Reduction Act - This collection of information contains requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act. The use of Standard Forms 424, 424A, 424B, and SFLLL and CD-346 has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under control numbers 0348-0040, 0348-0044, 0348-0043, 0348-0046 and 0605-0001. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the PRA unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB control number.

6. Executive Order 12866 - It has been determined that this notice is not significant for purposes of Executive Order 12866.

7. Delinquent Tax Liability – In accordance with current Federal appropriations law, NOAA will provide a successful corporate applicant a form to be completed by its authorized representatives certifying that the corporation has no Federally-assessed unpaid or delinquent tax liability or recent felony criminal convictions under any Federal law.

C. Reporting

Interim progress reports are due semi-annually and cover 6 month periods. Progress reports are to be submitted to NOAA via NOAA's Grants Online system and are due no later than 30 days after each 6 month reporting interval ends. A comprehensive final report is due no later than 90 days after the expiration date of the award. Performance reports should detail accomplishments as well as problems encountered during the reporting period, tracking the goals, objectives and milestones identified in the project narrative.

Recommended content and formats for performance reports can be found at our website:
http://www.nero.noaa.gov/educational_resources/bwet/applicants/index.htm

Evaluation reports should be submitted if an evaluation was proposed in the final project narrative. Formative evaluations can be reported with semi-annual performance reports. Final evaluations should be submitted with the final performance report. If additional time is needed to finalize the evaluation, a no-cost extension can be requested at least one month before the end date of the award.

Financial reports cover the periods from October 1 to March 31 (due by April 30) and April 1 to September 30 (due by October 30) throughout the award period and are submitted to the NOAA Grants Management Division via NOAA Grants Online system.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 requires grantees to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation for Federal assistance awards issued in FY 2011 or later. All grantees must report to the Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS). Information on this system can be found at www.FSRS.gov on all subawards over \$25,000. Complete details on reporting requirements will be provided to successful applicants in the award documentation provided by the NOAA Grants Management Division in the Grants Online award package.

VII. Agency Contacts

For information on the grant application process, contact Deirdre Kimball, New England B-WET Federal Program Officer, via email at deirdre.kimball@noaa.gov or by phone at 978- 281-9290.

For information on New England B-WET regional priorities and policies, contact the Program Manager, Colleen Coogan, via email at colleen.coogan@noaa.gov or by phone at 978-281-6181.

Questions about NOAA B-WET and this opportunity may also be directed to Bronwen Rice, B-WET National Coordinator, via email at bronwen.rice@noaa.gov or by phone at 202-482-6797.

VIII. Other Information

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) - Department of Commerce regulations implementing FOIA are found at 15 C.F.R. part 4, Public Information. These regulations set forth rules for the Department regarding making requested materials, information, and records publicly available under the FOIA. Applications submitted in response to this Federal Funding Opportunity may be subject to requests for release under the Act. In the event that an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information which is exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information. Based on these markings, the confidentiality of the contents of those pages will be protected to the extent permitted by law.